

House Resolution 96

By: Representatives Bordeaux of the 162nd and Sims of the 169th

A RESOLUTION

1 Compensating Mr. Douglas Echols; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, on the morning of February 1, 1986, a woman in Savannah, Georgia, was
3 kidnapped, raped, and robbed by three unknown assailants; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Douglas Echols was then residing in Savannah, Georgia, with his wife and
5 children, serving as a Staff Sergeant in the 360th Quartermaster Corps under the 175th
6 Ranger Battalion in the United States Army based out of Hunter Army Air Field, and he had
7 over ten years of experience in the army, previously serving in Germany, Turkey, Korea, and
8 Grenada; and

9 WHEREAS, on June 11, 1986, Mr. Douglas Echols was indicted by the Grand Jury of
10 Chatham County for the rape, robbery, and kidnapping of Donna Givens and for false
11 statement; and

12 WHEREAS, on March 26, 1987, Mr. Douglas Echols was tried and convicted of rape,
13 kidnapping, and false statement in Chatham County, Georgia; and

14 WHEREAS, at his trial Mr. Echols testified that he was not guilty in connection with the
15 kidnapping and rape of the woman in Savannah, Georgia, and two witnesses corroborated
16 Mr. Echols' testimony; and

17 WHEREAS, on March 26, 1987, the court sentenced Mr. Echols to serve 15 years for rape,
18 15 years for kidnapping, and one year for false statement, the sentences to run concurrently;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, on February 4, 1988, the Court of Appeals of Georgia affirmed Mr. Echols'
21 convictions and, on February 19, 1988, denied a motion for a rehearing; and

1 WHEREAS, during his imprisonment, Mr. Echols was subjected to severe violence from
2 inmates due to his conviction as a rapist and was transferred five times to different prisons,
3 one being a medical prison, each time being a new target for sex and intimidation; and

4 WHEREAS, among the injuries he suffered were stab wounds from a screwdriver; and

5 WHEREAS, due to his conviction, Mr. Echols was dishonorably discharged from the United
6 States Army, thereby losing full health care benefits and education benefits; and

7 WHEREAS, Mr. Echols was released on parole in 1991 after five years in prison, but was
8 required to wear an ankle monitor at all times and was announced as a convicted sex offender
9 to his community; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Echols served approximately another two years in prison after his initial
11 release due to obtaining a job outside his geographical parole limits; and

12 WHEREAS, in July of 2001, DNA testing conducted on behalf of Mr. Douglas Echols at
13 Forensic Science Associates in California conclusively proved that Mr. Echols's DNA did
14 not match the DNA from the semen obtained from the victim's rape kit; and

15 WHEREAS, on July 19, 2001, the scientific evidence was presented to the District
16 Attorney's Office of Chatham County and, after further testing by the Georgia State Crime
17 Lab, the state consented to an extraordinary motion for a new trial on June 3, 2002; and

18 WHEREAS, on October 7, 2002, the indictments against Mr. Echols for rape and kidnapping
19 were dismissed; and

20 WHEREAS, as a result of nearly 16 years of commitment to the Department of Corrections,
21 Mr. Echols has suffered loss of liberty, personal injury, injury to reputation, emotional
22 distress, and other damages and expenses totaling \$1.6 million; and

23 WHEREAS, because the conviction, incarceration, and subsequent loss of liberty and other
24 damages occurred through no fault or negligence on the part of Mr. Echols, it is only fitting
25 and proper that he be compensated for his loss.

26 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
27 GEORGIA that the Department of Corrections is authorized and directed to pay the sum of

- 1 \$1.6 million to Mr. Douglas Echols, as compensation as provided above. Said sum shall be
- 2 paid from funds appropriated to or available to said Department of Corrections and shall be
- 3 in full and complete satisfaction of all claims against the state arising out of said occurrence.